1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

CHAPTER III

THE PERIOD OF WEANING

WEANING marks the end of the infancy period.[1] It is a gradual process for which the mother prepares the infant by substituting solid foods for milk and by coaxing the child to spend more and more time on the floor of the porch rather than sitting in her lap. When she eventually decides that he is mature enough, usually during the second or third year, she prevents further breast feeding. She chooses the time in accordance with the adequacy of her child rather than his chronological age, a sickly child being weaned later than a healthy one. Several informants stated that infants stop breast feeding of their own accord, but others said that the mother stops the flow of milk by daubing her nipples with the sap of the breadfruit tree, a thick, viscous fluid, which is used by the natives as glue. If the infant is very persistent in trying to continue to suck, the mother may tell him that a *marsalai*[2] has taken the place of her milk, sometimes emphasizing this story by placing a leech on her breast.

After he has been weaned, the child must learn to depend entirely on the diet of his parents. He becomes adept at drinking soup from coconut-shell bowls, learns to munch the sago briquettes which his mother has cooked for the family, and begins to eat meat with his sago just as his parents do. He also learns that he cannot eat whenever he is hungry, but

[1] Wof's stepson Kum supplied most information on this phase of the process of socialization. He was a bright lad between four and five years old. Merik, Way's son, was also in this period. He was an unhappy child of about Kum's age, who seemed to resent the birth of his younger brother Kadowan.

[2] *Marsalai* is the pidgin English term for a class of huge supernatural beings who dwell in the swamps surrounding the tribe. These monsters usually take the form of great snakes or crocodiles. The belief in these monsters is widespread both in New Guinea and in Australia (cf. M. Mead, "The Marsalai Cult among the Arapesh," *Oceania*, IV [1933], 37–53).

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

may learn to avoid or kill a scorpion even though he has never been bitten by one. So it is with other dangers, especially the more serious ones; if children were permitted to learn to avoid wild boars or crocodiles by actually experiencing pain from them, the society would soon disappear. Parental warnings come true frequently enough so that children usually heed them. 866

A child is not permitted to show excessive fear of his environment. If he is too afraid of a small snake or lizard to kill it, or if he is afraid to walk in the swamp lest he be pricked by a thorn, his older *brothers* will tease him and his parents will scold him. An overanxious child is usually called a "baby" in a derogatory manner. [861]

The warnings of parents and older siblings include supernatural dangers. A child is taught that certain glens, springs, rocks, and trees are dwelling places of *marsalai*, and he learns the names of the supernatural beings who inhabit them. He is warned that, if he goes too near one of these places, the monster will cause a violent storm and high wind that may blow down the dwelling of his parents, or it will "shoot" a sago needle into his foot for disturbing it. Such a needle, although invisible, is very painful and can be removed only by adult operators who have mastered the special magical technique. Actual storms and unseen needles are used to impress the validity of these beliefs upon the child. Whenever there is a severe storm, the adults in the hamlet speculate as to who has disturbed the *marsalai*. Was it Yat who was clearing a garden too near to the rock in which Kumbundum dwelt, or was it Wof who went hunting near the bog inhabited by Kurumbukwas? Similarly when a child reported that he had a pain in his foot which felt like a thorn but which he could not see, his parents would say: "There, you see. You have been 'shot' by a *marsalai*. We told you to beware of disturbing them." 869 776 •

A child is warned that he should not go near the house tamberan while the yam-cult ceremonies are being held. He is told that at this time the adult men of the tribe consort with *marsalai*. He is warned that although men can do so 869

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

One evening I started whistling when Mar and Gwiyap, two adolescents, were in my home. They told me to stop, warning me that ghosts would come if I persisted. I continued to whistle in order to discover what their reactions would be. They pleaded with me to cease and finally bolted for home.

A marked change takes place in a boy's reaction to *marsalai* when he reaches adolescence. At about the age of puberty he is initiated into the first stage of the yam cult.[24] He must first decide whether he wishes to join the *yenema* or *minjama* section. Although it is presumably up to him to make this choice, his father, older *brothers*, and *paternal uncles* exert considerable pressure upon him. It is their wish to keep the hamlet about equally represented in each section and they therefore see to it that such a balance is maintained by influencing the adolescents who are ready to make their choice.

After a boy has decided which section he will join, he is taken into the forest, where a rude hut has been constructed at a sufficient distance from the hamlet, so that women cannot hear. Here the young men of the hamlet who have recently been initiated meet to practice gong beating and flute playing.[25] Their practice is overseen and criticized by older men, the parents and *uncles* of the novices. On the first occasion that a boy attends one of these practice meetings, he is told that the sounds that he has heard as a child during ceremonies are man-made and not the voices of *marsalai*. He pretends to be surprised because theoretically he should not know what in fact he already does. He is also told at this time that he must not in any way reveal this secret to any child or female, and he is warned very seriously that the mere knowledge of the secret of the cult may kill such persons. Then, during sporadic meetings over a period of sev-

[24] Boys are sometimes initiated into the cult a year or so before physiological pubescence. It has seemed more expedient, however, to describe it in this rather than the previous chapter. This initiation should not be confused with the age-grade initiation.

[25] The spot for the camp is picked near a variety of tropical tree which has flange-like roots. These roots ring out when beaten and are used as a substitute for gongs.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

882 794 533 eral months, he is given some instruction in gong beating and flute playing, so that he may show his prowess at the coming initiation. Most of the time, however, he watches those who have already been initiated, but who have not yet fully mastered the techniques, practice the complicated rhythms, and then tries to copy them.

882 796 794 796 [534] [302] On the day of the ceremony, the beating of the house tamberan gongs begins early in the morning. Meanwhile, the boy who is to be initiated prepares himself for the event. He carefully combs his hair and paints his face in the prescribed manner. About mid-morning he is led near the house tamberan by his sponsor,[26] who warns him that when he enters the building he will see the *marsalai*, who will be on an altar in the center of the dance floor. The sponsor especially warns the initiate not to look up at the altar too quickly lest the shock kill him. The lad is then left waiting with other boys who are to be initiated while the sponsor goes to tell the men already there that the initiates are about to appear. At this, the gongs, flute playing, and singing cease abruptly, and the men prepare to produce special sound effects to impress the initiates. The sponsor returns for his initiate and leads him up to the house tamberan. A screen of sago fronds hides the inside of the building from view. Gongs and flutes burst into a deafening roar as the initiate is made to stoop and enter an opening in the screen. The sponsor holds the initiate by the arm and dances with him around the altar. The men shout and dance around with them. The gong beaters and flutists play wildly. Someone just outside the house tamberan whirls a bull-roarer, and the sponsor shouts in the boy's ear that its sound is that of the wings of a *marsalai*. For the first two rounds the boy keeps his eyes fixed on the ground; then his sponsor tells him to look up at the altar, where there is a stylized representation of a human head carved from wood and painted with designs in black and white. The boy is told that this too is a hoax, that it is made

[26] I am not sure how a boy's sponsor is determined. In any case, he is a member of the appropriate cult section and of the parental generation.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

of wood, but that the secret must be carefully guarded from the women and children. The sponsor then thrusts a roasted yam into the boy's hand and leaves him to dance by himself in the circling ring of men as he eats it.

The boy's dream of participating in the cult ceremonies is thus finally realized. From now on he may take his turn in the gong orchestra, taking care not to make a mistake lest he be shouted at and teased by the older men, and hoping to gain their praise for a perfect performance. Although adolescents are usually only permitted to beat the gongs while the simpler rhythms are being played, those who have shown a special aptitude during the practice sessions and who make no mistakes during their first few performances at the house tamberan may be permitted to try their hand at more complicated rhythms. Although few adolescents gain the skill necessary for a public performance on the flutes, they can put to use the secret dance practices of their childhood as they skip around the altar, their hands above their heads, their eyes on the wooden figures, and their bare feet rhythmically slapping the earth floor in unison with the other dancers. They may also join in the chorus which the dancers shout after each of the song leader's verses. Finally, they may squat with the adults as they drop out of the dance to smoke cigarettes, chew betel, and gossip.

The unfolding of the hoax of the cult does not destroy a Kwoma boy's belief in *marsalai;* it simply verifies his suspicion that the *marsalai* do not palpably visit the house tamberan at the time of the cult ceremonies. He still believes in the existence of these supernatural beings and does not doubt that they live in their special dwelling places and cause storms or "shoot" sago needles when they are disturbed. He is also impressed with the fact that these *marsalai* are responsible for a successful yam crop, and that the chief purpose of the yam cult ceremony is to insure their cooperation in producing a bountiful harvest.

An adolescent reacts toward his younger *brothers* in much the same way as he did during childhood. Indeed, a specific

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

A man who has attained high prestige in the community and, in addition, has taken the head of an enemy, is asked to join *Nokwi*, the highest stage of the yam cult, and he thereby receives the greatest honor that a Kwoma man can attain. If he is able to achieve this mark of status, the final mystery of the *marsalai* is unfolded to him. He is told that the booming rhythm that he has always heard at the *Nokwi* ceremony is not the footsteps of the great female *marsalai* in whose honor the ceremony is held, but is a sound made by a huge water drum.[28] A man plants yams for the first time on the occasion of his initiation into *Nokwi* and learns from the cult members how to solicit the aid and coöperation of the *marsalai*, which are believed necessary for a successful yam crop.

The yam cult, in addition to being a mode of ranking men in accordance with their attainments and of providing a means of gaining the support of the *marsalai*, is the primary institution for artistic expression. It has been shown how the child secretly learns to play the gongs, to sing, and to dance, and how during adolescence he is formally taught these skills, first in the bush house and later at the house tamberan. During adulthood men vie with one another in demonstrating their accomplishments in these artistic techniques. A man who is superior in one or more of them gains high praise from the community; people speak of him as a *harafa ma malaka*. At the beginning of each ritual the participants examine the carved wooden figures on the altar and comment on their excellence, those who have made them standing by to receive the praise. Men who are adept at carving may expend considerable time and effort fashioning and painting the formalized wooden heads and figures which are supposed to represent the *marsalai* of the cult, in order to have them so displayed.

Men who show a talent for gong beating have the opportunity during the cult ceremonies to play the most sophisticated rhythms in the orchestra, and those who excel in com-

[28] The water drum is a hollowed log shaped like a canoe, truncated at both ends, suspended in water so that the lips are submerged, and beaten by a pole wielded by two men.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

in shouted choruses while they dance. The men of prestige sing the verses. One man will sing as many verses as he can either remember or compose and then announce that he is through by repeating the chorus, when another man continues. When no one can think of any more verses, the group dances silently until someone starts a new song. The man who can remember the most verses or who is most adept at improvising them gains considerable prestige.

Novices are not permitted to play the flutes during a ceremony, as this requires considerable skill. A pair of those who have learned one of these complicated melodies as a result of long, guided practice at the bush house are called upon to play the flutes when the ceremony calls for them. They stand facing one another each with a flute cradled over the left arm. One plays the big "male" flute, a large bamboo about seven feet long, and the other plays a "female" flute, slightly shorter and of smaller diameter.[27] Since these instruments have no stops and are therefore capable of producing only a few notes, the melodies are arranged so that the two flutes are played in series, thus permitting double the range of variation that would be possible if they were played in unison. This necessitates close coöperation between the two players, which apparently requires a great deal of practice to accomplish, and those who master it are rewarded with high praise.

The man of Rumbima hamlet who had gained most renown in the cult ceremonies was War. He could dance tirelessly though not brilliantly, he could lead a gong chorus, he was a skilled wood carver, and he could compete with anyone in the subtribe in remembering the verses of songs. The other men of Rumbima did not vie much with War, but put him forward as their champion against the high-ranking men of other hamlets. When a ceremony was given at Rumbima, it would be War who would arrange and direct it.

Even after a man has experienced the whole gamut of initiation rites, he still avoids the dwelling places of *marsalai*

[27] The "male" flute is about three inches in diameter; the "female," about two.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

821 just as he did as a child. He still believes that rain and wind
• 776 storms, thunder and lightning, earthquakes, and rainbows are caused by angry *marsalai*.[28] Although he takes care not to walk near the dwelling places of these supernatural beings, he reacts aggressively toward them after they have brought about the annoying natural event. If a storm is brewing, a Kwoma man will customarily repeat an imprecation: "Cursed *marsalai* who is causing this storm to come, may you be killed. May you be bound hand and foot so that you cannot move. May you be stuffed in the bottom of a hollow tree so that you may no longer annoy us with rain and wind."[29] At the end of each line of the imprecation, the cursing man spits toward the oncoming storm.

753 Many Kwoma men learn to abstract the unseen sago
755 needles which *marsalai* sometimes shoot into the feet of those
[776] who disturb them. The method employed consists of rubbing the painful spot with a leaf and of repeating a malediction which supposedly causes the needle to come near to the surface. The operator then sucks the painful spot, extracts the needle, and spits it on a coconut leaf, which is wrapped up, immersed in water for a time, and then thrown away.

825 When the clouds of mosquitoes are thicker and hungrier
776 than usual, it is believed to be the work of *marsalai*. A huge supernatural crocodile is supposed to live somewhere in the great swamp below the range on which the Kwoma dwell. Mosquitoes make their home in the belly of this monster and swarm out to pester the Kwoma when he opens his mouth.
825 When this occurs, or rather when the mosquitoes are so thick
776 that it is believed to have occurred, the men of one or another
789 of the Kwoma hamlets will beat a special rhythm on the house tamberan gongs, a message to this *marsalai*, angrily commanding him to shut his mouth. The men of other ham-

[823] [28] Earthquakes are believed to be caused by a huge *marsalai* when he thrusts his digging stick into the ground as he plants yams. If anyone should approach his swamp dwelling, the Kwoma fear that mountains would be leveled by the terrible quake that would ensue. Rainbows are thought to be caused by another *marsalai* when he spits betel juice through the sky.

[29] The curse is repeated for all the *marsalai* who are suspected in the particular instance.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

lets, when they hear this rhythm, rush to their own house tamberans and repeat the rhythm on their gongs. The *marsalai* must tremble, it is said, when he hears the thunderous command issuing successively from each house tamberan in each of the Kwoma subtribes. Doubtless he hastily shuts his mouth.

A Kwoma male must submit to the hazing of age-grade initiation even after he has reached adulthood. There are four occasions on which he attends this ceremony as an initiate, and, since it takes place only once every five years, there are normally three rites during adulthood when he must permit his *ceremonial father* to slash his tongue and penis. Thus it is not until a man is over thirty that he ceases to be an initiate. On each occasion he advances a degree in prestige and is permitted to wear a certain hair ornament that those of lower grades may not wear. Just as the newly initiated adolescent derogated the uninitiated children, so the adult derogates those in stages below him and struts about wearing his newly acquired headgear.

After a man has passed through the initiation cycle, he takes his turn as an initiator. He adopts a *ceremonial son* whom he sponsors through the cycle. Finally, at the age of fifty or more, after twenty years as an initiate and twenty years as an initiator, he attends the age-grade ceremonies merely as a spectator.

The attitude of an adult man toward ghosts differs little from that of a child. He still reacts to them with a mixture of aggression and avoidance. Kwoma men are quite loath to walk very far from their dwellings after dark, and if they do so they either carry a torch or wear a dagger made from a human thigh bone, both of which are supposed to frighten ghosts and make them keep their distance. In spite of these precautions, men not infrequently encounter what they believe to be ghosts. One evening I heard frightened shouting, then the patter of feet rushing by the house, and finally angry shouts and imprecations from the house tamberan. The next morning I learned that Kar and Marok had stayed late on a visit to another hamlet and had been forced to re-

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

121 861 or beaten by his teachers. Thus a strong habit of heeding whatever warning a teacher may issue is built up in every Kwoma individual. As a result, Kwoma teachers may warn 121 869 their pupils concerning dangers which do not exist and expect that their pupils will heed. This is in fact the case in the inculcation of supernatural beliefs. By means of warnings Kwoma teachers instill in their pupils an unrealistic fear of *marsalai*, ghosts, sorcery, and blood.[1]

• [796] *Marsalai* are supposed to be huge monsters in the form of snakes or crocodiles which cause rain and wind storms, earthquakes, and other cosmic phenomena. They are supposed to 869 be present at the yam-cult ceremonies and to be responsible 796 for a plentiful yield of this crop. A child is first warned about [862] these monsters early in life. When a Kwoma mother weans her child she warns him not to suckle, lest he be injured by the *marsalai* which has now taken possession of her breast. She sometimes emphasizes this story by putting a bloodsucker [823] on her breast. During childhood a person is warned not to [821] go near or touch certain rocks and waterholes, lest the *marsalai* who dwell therein cause a storm or shoot a sago needle [796] into his foot in anger at being disturbed. He is also warned at this period not to go near the house tamberan during a cult ceremony lest the *marsalai* who are present kill him. He is told that the sounds[2] which he hears are the voices of these [798] monsters. When he is initiated at the beginning of adolescence, he is warned not to look up too suddenly at the cult figures which represent the *marsalai* lest the shock kill him.

869 775 Ghosts are believed to be the spirits of dead Kwoma who live on the outskirts of the tribal territory. Either as invisible shadows or in the form of a bird or an animal, they sometimes visit the hamlet of the living, particularly at night or when a death has occurred. It is believed that they sometimes attack a person, that they can cause accidents by frightening him, that they are eager to take souls to the land of the dead, and that they cause nightmares and fits of possession. Most warn-

[1] Kwoma have other supernatural beliefs, but these four provide the most important sources of unrealistic fear.

[2] Gongs, flutes, and bull-roarers.

I: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

had previously experienced for not heeding realistic warnings; the response was avoiding the waterhole; the cues were the sight of the waterhole and Kar's instructions; and the reward was the reduction of fear. Since I had not been brought up in Kwoma society, Kar's warning did not evoke fear and I did not make the right response.

Although the technique of warning provides the basis for the inculcation of supernatural fears, several other factors play an important part in this process. One of these factors is the belief that supernatural dangers are similar to real dangers, a fact which strengthens the Kwoma child's fear of them by the principle of secondary generalization.[4]

Since *marsalai* are described as great snakes or crocodiles which live in the swamp, realistic warnings about snakes, crocodiles, and other dangerous animals would tend to generalize to these supernatural monsters. In other words, each time a Kwoma is reinforced for heeding a warning about an animal, particularly a snake or crocodile, he is also somewhat reinforced for heeding warnings about *marsalai*,[5] that is, unrealistic fears. A second source of generalization is that warnings about *marsalai* all concern disturbing their dwelling places. The common word for house is used to describe these supposed dwellings, so that all realistic warnings about trespassing in, and stealing from, the house of human beings also strengthen the warnings about *marsalai*. Finally, *marsalai* are described as being huge. Since large animals and

[4] If two objects are described by the same term, a person tends to respond to them both in a similar manner. Hull has described this as secondary generalization. See C. L. Hull, "The Problem of Stimulus Equivalence in Behavior Theory," *Psychol. Rev.*, XLVI (1939), 9–30. It is also discussed by Miller. See N. E. Miller and John Dollard, *Social Learning and Imitation* (New Haven, 1941), chap. v. Experimental evidence in support of this principle has recently been adduced by Dr. Jane Birge. See J. S. Birge, "The Rôle of Verbal Responses in Transfer" (Doctoral Dissertation, Yale University, 1941). G. P. Murdock has found empirical support for this principle in a study of the generalization of incest taboos by means of common kinship terms.

[5] Kwoma vivify their warnings about *marsalai* by telling children that the sounds they hear at the time of a ceremony are the voices of these monsters. The sounds are in reality produced by gongs, bull-roarers, and flutes, but this theory offers another avenue of generalization from animals to *marsalai* on the basis of the sounds which they both make.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

big men are likely to be more dangerous than small ones, generalization on the basis of size also tends to support the warnings issued about these supernatural beings.

Ghosts are described not only as having human form but as actually being the spirits of deceased persons. Kwoma seldom speak of ghosts in general terms, but usually specify the ghost of some particular deceased relative. When a Kwoma dreams of someone who has died, he is told that the ghost of this person has actually visited him in the night. Moreover, living persons are sometimes called ghosts. Thus the similarity between men and ghosts is impressed upon a child. Hence, when he is rewarded for heeding warnings about living persons, this should by generalization strengthen the habit of heeding warnings about ghosts. Kwoma children are told that ghosts can assume the form of birds and animals. Whenever a bird or animal is heard or seen at night, it is often suggested that it may be a ghost in disguise. Thus fear of ghosts may generalize from animals as well as from men.

Fear of food "poisoned" by sorcery has, like food contaminated by blood, a realistic source of generalization from food which is actually spoiled. Kwoma employ the same word (*kafwa sek*) to describe putrifying meat or fruit, and to describe food which they believe is "poisoned." Thus if a child becomes ill after not heeding the realistic warning against eating spoiled food, this should tend to strengthen warnings about sorcery. A second source from which the belief in sorcery may receive generalized support is realistic warnings concerning aggression from human beings. Each time a person is scolded, threatened, insulted, or spanked by another person, such an event should strengthen his fear that he can be harmed by sorcery also.

A realistic source from which fears about blood contamination may spring is less evident. The following suggestions may be made. When sickness results from food which is really contaminated, it should strengthen a person's tendency to avoid food which is supposed to be contaminated. Secondly, the Kwoma word for milk is "breast blood." Children are

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

Thus, not only can the supernatural fears of pupils extinguish, but so also can the fears of the teachers become reduced in the same way, so that they no longer maintain these beliefs by sanctioning them.

The fact that Kwoma children can learn not to heed, and Kwoma parents to stop issuing and sanctioning unrealistic warnings, raises a serious question. Why does this not occur more frequently? Why, in the course of time, have not all these supernatural beliefs disappeared as a result of this process? The answer to this is suggested by one of the basic postulates of the functional theory of anthropology. Parents continue to issue unrealistic warnings and to sanction them because they form an integral part of one or more systems of beliefs, customs, and organized activities which, as a whole, satisfy a social need.[14]

The belief in *marsalai* forms a large part of the charter[15] of the yam cult.[16] *Marsalai* are believed to be present whenever this cult holds a ceremonial meeting and to bless those who participate. In playing the instruments of the cult, the members are producing a representation of the voices of these beings. After a ceremony, no man who has attended may have intercourse with his wife, because the powerful and dangerous influence of the cult *marsalai* still clings to him, and might injure her. Thus, were the belief in these monsters to disappear, the Kwoma would be forced either to provide a new *raison d'être* for their cult ceremonies or to give them up altogether. It is not necessary here to present a detailed account of the functions of the cult, but a few of them may be mentioned to show how important this institution is in Kwoma society. The most direct function of the cult seems

[14] See B. Malinowski, "The Scientific Basis of Applied Anthropology," *Reale Academia D'Italia*, XVIII (1940), 22.

[15] Every institution consists in part of the traditional purposes and reasons for its existence which are believed by the members of the personnel. Malinowski has called this the charter. See B. Malinowski, "The Group and the Individual in Functional Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLIV (1939), 932-934.

[16] The personnel, norms, and material apparatus of this institution can be gathered from the descriptive chapters. The charter and functions are stressed here because of their importance in this context.

1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

796 182 121 to be that it provides a means of artistic expression. Cult ceremonies furnish the chief opportunity for singing, dancing, rhythmic gong beating, flute playing, and the manufacture of carved figures. Numerous important integrative functions are also fulfilled by the yam cult. It provides one of the [554] bases for the social stratification of men, differentiating four prestige positions: boys who do not belong to the cult, members of the first stage, members of the second stage, and members of the final stage. The yam cult is closely integrated with head-hunting, in that only those who have taken a head can [562] become members of the highest stage. The yam cult excludes women and thus helps to define their status and to maintain the division of labor by sex. Through such exclusion it provides a socially accepted means for men to express their ag- [786] gressive feelings toward women. It also provides an opportunity for ceremonial license. Finally, the yam cult is associated with agriculture. The cult is thus an important institution, closely integrated into Kwoma culture, and to tamper with its charter by refusing to believe in *marsalai* is something which no pupil or teacher could lightly do.

121 182 Beliefs in *marsalai*, in addition to forming part of the charter of the yam cult, provide an explanation for cosmic • 796 events and a means of controlling them. Bad rain and wind 821 storms, earthquakes, and rainbows[17] are thought to be pro- [823] duced by these monsters. These beliefs permit a Kwoma to [782] perform certain practices which are thought to control them. In the first place he can avoid disturbing them, and in the second place he can utter an aggressive prayer which he believes [781] will stop the storm or earthquake.[18] Thus, both because beliefs in *marsalai* form an integral part of the yam cult and because they perform other functions as well, Kwoma teachers would be very loath to cease believing in them, even if events made them skeptical of their supposed powers.

[132] [17] Wind storms and earthquakes not infrequently destroy Kwoma dwellings and are thus seriously dangerous.

[18] It is assumed here that any activity in the face of danger is normally more reinforcing than passive acceptance, even though this activity is not effective in averting danger.

794 partly by the fact that membership in the two cults is maintained at an [241] approximate equality. These cults are connected with yams in that the cults are thought to be essential to the growth of these vegetables, and [534] they are held two yam plantings apart. The second stage is the nokwi which [241] introduces mysteries of the water drum to its members. This is also connected with yams in that the young men are initiated into this only after they have planted their first yams--itself a sacred rite.

754 Black magic is constantly being practiced and everyone in the culture is always careful of food leavings and blood which are the two most important [182] materials for the hands of the operator. This belief is very strongly [154] integrated in the culture and seems to function in the expression of aggressions and to offer a readymade explanation of neurotic anxiety.

795 The dfad dwell on the top of a nearby mountain in a topsyturvy existence. These ghosts chase and frighten people at night but do not kill them. They sometimes take the form of a bird or animal in the day time. In particular they hover around a dead man, for their job is to escort him [764] to the land of the dead. (There is a double funeral, first an exposure [765] on platform and secondly, burial of bones beneath floor of the house.)

796 There are other types of supernatural creatures who dwell in rocks, waterholes, etc., in the guise of snakes. They cause wind, rain, thunder, lightening and the rainbow, and are dangerous to man in that if they are disturbed they will shoot him with a sago needle which is painful but not [794] fatal. These beings are associated with the men's cult. The uninitiated are told that the esoteria are made and operated by these creatures.

. . . . . .

128 This is the bare outline of the culture in itself incomplete. Some of the interstices and interrelations we have the information to fill in and others we have not.